1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

children from the portage road's truck traffic, the Kaska Indians reacted to the fencing by construing it as a move to keep the Tahltan imprisoned on the reserve.

Only as far as such governmental services as aid to indigent Indians, free hospitalization, medical care, and gifts are concerned, do the Kaska accept the political authority of the whites. When these services are found inadequate or are, for any reason, interrupted, resentment is quickly expressed. Old Man reported that a former Indian Agent had given people fish line, nets, and cartridges. Under this agent's administration indigent Indians had also received not only rations, but a sizable winter outfit. Since then two new agents have served the community without giving gifts to the population. Many people therefore feel that the current Indian Agent is misdirecting government money which should go toward the Indians' general welfare. As a result of this chain of circumstances, the current agent is disliked and the governments are in little favor.[18] Louis Maza compared the position of the Kaska to the Indians of the United States. He had heard that in the latter country, the Indian is well treated, receiving adequate medical care as well as treaty money, while in Canada the natives are ignored.[19]

As far as the individual can be said to conceive of his political status, he is mainly concerned with his rights and privileges as an Indian and inclined to overlook any duties or liabilities to which he may be politically subject. He comprehends government as an agency which is supposed to take care of all the Indians—not only of indigent people—to the extent of protecting their trap lines from encroachment, supplying them with food when game is scarce, and providing medical care and hospital facilities. Education is not as strongly endorsed as these other rights. Furthermore he demands that on the Indian reserves, the people should be immune from government interference. Only in case of misbehavior on the "white reserve" is governmental authority recognized.

The Indian resents the duty of bearing arms. No Indians were drafted from the Kaska tribes in the course of the second World War, but several threats of conscription were rumored, all meeting with decidedly negative reactions from young men. According to Nitla, the government did not treat the people well. Consequently the Indians have a hard life and therefore can have no business to fight in the "government's war." Conscription, he opined, should be reserved for people who enjoy nice homes and comfortable living. Little resentment is expressed toward paying taxes on trapped furs. The sums paid, however, are quite insignificant when compared to the total value of a catch. Old Man and others pointed out that the Indians were getting no return for these revenues, and again alluded to the former Indian Agent who had made a return to the people in the form of gifts.

Political authority in the Kaska area is represented by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Provincial Police in British Columbia, and the Indian Agent. This authority is most immediate during the summer, when the community is grouped in Lower Post within

[18] Superficially the lessons for applied anthropology seem plain: let the government assume the roles of a protecting and providing host and their legitimacy will be strengthened in native eyes. Actually such a role would be difficult to fulfill, although progress could certainly be made, first, by extending more abundant relief and medical care, and, second, by reducing, through tact, the severity of regulations.

[19] In northern British Columbia, west of Fort Nelson, Indians do not receive treaty payments as they have never concluded treaties with the Canadian government.

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183 easy range of supervision. During the rest of the year, after the people have dispersed to
642 their trapping districts, the authority becomes greatly relaxed. Only rarely do police operate far afield from the trading post.

622 Apart from the representatives of the provincial and Dominion law enforcement agencies, and the Indian Affairs Branch, political authority is nominally invested in native chiefs. Theoretically, each tribe or district is supposed to have a chief. Actually, only the Nelson people have such an executive and he is apparently expected to represent the whole Kaska nation. The chief is appointed by the Indian Agent for an indefinite period without remuneration. The duties of the chief are poorly defined, but he may be regarded as a liaison officer between the government officials and the people.

622 The current chief is personally a rather ineffectual person whose nominal authority in
554 no way increases his prestige among the Indians. Since no prerogatives are attached to the office, it is not surprising that his status is not different from that of any other mature adult. The general attitude toward the chief is one of criticism for his failure to be more assertive in the service of his people. Old Kean expressed his opinion of the current chief in the following words: "Just like kid. Never talk nothing. Just sit down one place. That's why nobody go down there [i.e., to the east reserve]. Just stop alone." The fact that the chief does not belong to Old Kean's tribe is undoubtedly a factor influencing the latter's attitude. Observation failed to support the old man's statement that the east reserve was deliberately avoided by the bulk of the society.

622 When the chieftainship was vacant several years ago two Upper Liard men, Old Kean and Old Man, rejected offers of appointment to the position, the former because he felt himself to be too old and the latter because, not receiving payment for his service, he thought people would not listen to him. River Joe is reported to have sought the office unsuccessfully.

656 It has already been pointed out that the principal governmental activity, with which
183 the Kaska have experience, is regulation. The most common subjects of such regulation are
625 trapping and drinking. In the exercise of their regulatory functions the governments, through their agents, do not act in a manner calculated to allay the Indian's antipathy to authority. In the past there are said to have been police officers willing to overlook many minor infractions of laws applying to Indians, particularly those applying to drinking. Currently policemen, whose problems have greatly increased as a result of the opening of the area by the Alaska Highway and the subsequent influx of strangers, are much more rigorous. During the period of field work they frequently acted as detectives, patrolling Lower Post late at night and visiting camps in order to apprehend misdemeanors.[20] As a result most of the people have learned to be constantly wary of the police. Young men, even if innocent of any offense, often flee and hide when an officer is reported to be approaching. In short,

[20] It is not uncommon for provincial and Dominion police to enter a tent or cabin without a warrant if they have reason to suspect drinking. While Indians are unaware of the powers of a warrant, they resent the invasion of their privacy. From white men Indians have learned to question the right of the Mounted Police to operate in British Columbia, where a local police organization is maintained. The Mounties explain that they are free to operate anywhere in the Dominion of Canada when engaged in the enforcement of national revenue (liquor) and Indian regulations.